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The Provincial Governor in the English Colonies of North America.

By EVARTS BOUTELL GREENE, Professor of History in the University of Illinois. [Harvard Historical Studies, Vol. VII.] (New York and London : Longmans, Green and Co. 1898. Pp. x, 292.)

ENCOURAGING signs are beginning to appear that scholars are seriously attempting to work out the history of the American provinces, as distinguished from the history of the New England colonies. The subject is also being approached necessarily and properly from the institutional standpoint. Mr. Greene has made a valuable contribution to the work in his monograph on the Provincial Governor. It is a comparative study of the office of governor as it developed in the proprietary and royal provinces. After an introductory chapter in which he briefly traces the evolution of proprietary and royal government and shows how in their normal forms they were essentially the same, he discusses the evolution of the provincial executive, the governor's appointment, tenure of office and emoluments, his position as an agent of the home government, his relations with the council, his executive powers, his relation to the judiciary, and in three chapters the action and interaction between him and the assembly. Certain typical commissions and instructions are printed at the close of the volume. The material for the work has been drawn almost exclusively from accessible printed sources ; no attempt has been made to render it more complete by resort to matter still in manuscript. At the present time and in a subject of this nature, such a course was doubtless wise, for enough of the commissions and instructions and of the colonial laws and records are in print to enable one to draw from them a fairly accurate and satisfactory account of the provincial governor as an official. That Mr. Greene has done. By research among archives he might have made his account of the office more exhaustive, but in its outlines, its main features, it would not have been essentially changed. He has conferred a greater favor upon students by issuing his book thus early, than he would have bestowed by such increased perfection of detail as might have resulted from prolonged investigation. He has shown care and good judgment in the treatment of the material at his command ; his attitude is impartial, his conclusions are conservative. The result is that we now for the first time possess a monograph from which one may learn what position was occupied by the chief organ of the provincial executive within the system of which he formed a part.

But the subject is broad. In its treatment much had to be said about the legislature, the judiciary, relations with the home government, the provincial system in general. The council necessarily received much attention. The executive, or even a part of it, could not be treated except in connection with the whole organism. The printed authorities alone afford only a fragmentary view of the provinces. Even these authorities Mr. Greene could not be supposed to have read or

digested, so as to have produced from them a rounded and fully proportioned picture of what the provincial governor was in all his forms and relations. Mr. Greene rather has extracted from such sources as were at his command the material which suited his purpose and which could be presented within the limits of his book. If one then should say that the treatment is somewhat incomplete, or even fragmentary, if one might think that in many instances other illustrations could be selected which would prove the points that he wished to make quite as well as, or in some cases even better than those he has chosen, the critic would not thereby reflect at all upon Mr. Greene's diligence or cast any doubt upon his success, but would simply suggest that the subject is too broad to be fully treated within the limits set and too new to be adequately treated as yet by any one. For a considerable time to come, in all matters relating to the colonial period of our history, we must be content with results which are relatively satisfactory and complete. Much more work, I take it, must be done, in social as well as political history, the conditions actually existing in the different provinces must be understood and distinguished much more clearly, we must know better than we now do how much effectiveness there was in the support given by the home government to the governors, before we can fully estimate their position. And how can any of these results be attained until the documentary and other sources of our early history are made much more accessible in print, and until they have been more scientifically studied than has been common until recent years?

Mr. Greene, in speaking of tenure of office, might profitably have referred to the fact that royal governors were frequently transferred from one province to another and have taken this into account in estimating the permanence of tenure. Andros and Nicholson are notable instances in point. He seems uncertain as to the time when the treasurer was added to the officials of New York. This was done in the fall of 1706, as is shown by the governor's speech at the opening of the September session of that year, and by the *Laws*, Chap. 159. On pp. 145 and 155 he speaks of the Massachusetts charter of 1691 and the Pennsylvania "charter" of 1701 as if they were documents of the same character and class. He would have found in the history of the Third Intercolonial War better and more numerous instances of the designation by the assembly in New York of commissioners to control military affairs, and of the confusion occasioned thereby, than he has given. On p. 138 he refers to Chalmers as authority for the statement that the erection of a court of exchequer by Gov. Nicholson of South Carolina was illegal, but Chalmers is speaking in that passage concerning Gov. Johnston of North Carolina. Mr. Greene's manner of referring to the volumes of the *Maryland Archives* is confusing rather than helpful. I may conclude this criticism of a book for which substantial praise is due by suggesting that the addition of a chapter on the relation of the governor to the land system, and of another on the ecclesiastical side of his activity, would have made it more complete and valuable.

HERBERT L. OSGOOD.